

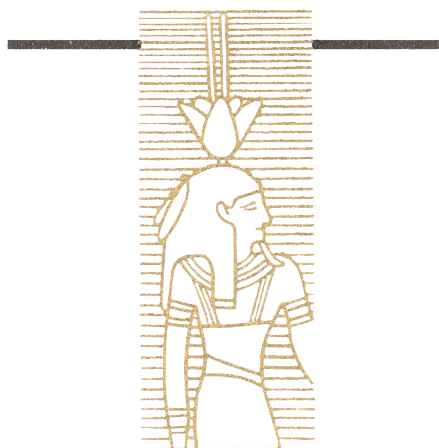


BARAKAT  
MIRROR OF ALL AGES & CULTURES



HAN DYNASTY





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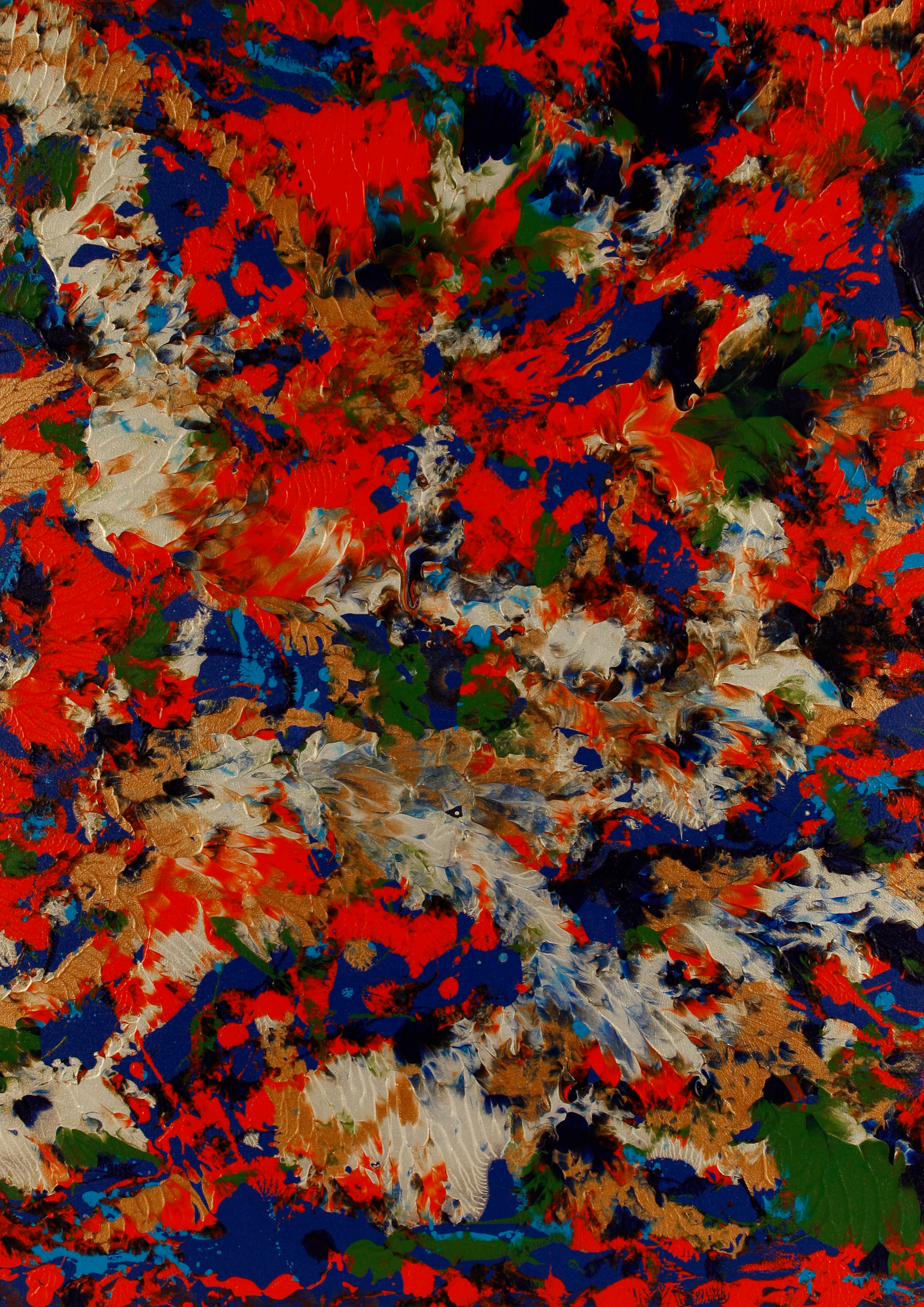
All our artefacts are guaranteed to be genuine and a certificate of authenticity is included with each item.



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# Introduction

The Han Dynasty was arguably the most important dynasty in Chinese history, so much so that many modern day Chinese people refer to themselves as Han. The Han Dynasty was also a period of one of the greatest artistic outpourings in Chinese history, easily on par with the glories of their Western contemporaries, Greece and Rome. Wealth pouring into China from trade along the Silk Road initiated a period of unprecedented luxury. Stunning bronze vessels were created and decorated with elegant inlaid gold and silver motifs. Jade carvings reached a new level of technical brilliance. But perhaps the artistic revival of the Han Dynasty is nowhere better represented than in their sculptures and vessels that were interred with deceased nobles. Called *mingqi*, literally meaning 'spirit articles', these works depicted a vast array of subject, from warriors and horses to ovens and livestock, which were buried alongside the dead for use in the next world, reflecting the Chinese belief that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus, quite logically, the things we require to sustain and nurture our bodies in this life would be just as necessary in our next life.

This dynasty represented a particularly dynamic time. It originated with the warring factions that caused the collapse of the Qin Dynasty in 206 BC, upon which the once-unified Chinese nation became divided into 19 feudal states under the regime of the insurgent leader Xiang Yu. The bitter fighting between these states resulted in the eventual victory of the first emperor of the Han Dynasty, Liu Bang, and the suicide of Xiang Yu in 202 BC. The small principality, one of the 19, over which Liu Bang ruled was named Hanzhong, and lent a shortened version of its name to the eventual multi-state agglomeration that was to become China.

The Han Dynasty consolidated its power over the two subsequent centuries, and engineered massive agricultural reform that lent economic weight to social change. This, in turn, led to trade expansion, with new trade routes, such as the Silk Road, and the route to Parthia, and a burgeoning middle class that brought new prosperity across the social system. Military expeditions expanded across Asia as far as Ukraine and the shores of the Caspian Sea, while China also kept up cautious diplomatic contact with the Roman Empire and the Kushans. Early Han rule was based around the Taoist model, and was comparatively at the mercy of powerful neighbours such as Xiongnu, nomadic tribes and petty internal squabbles. However, by the reign of Emperor Wu, the Han Dynasty had achieved its apogee and was able to assert itself over neighbouring areas.

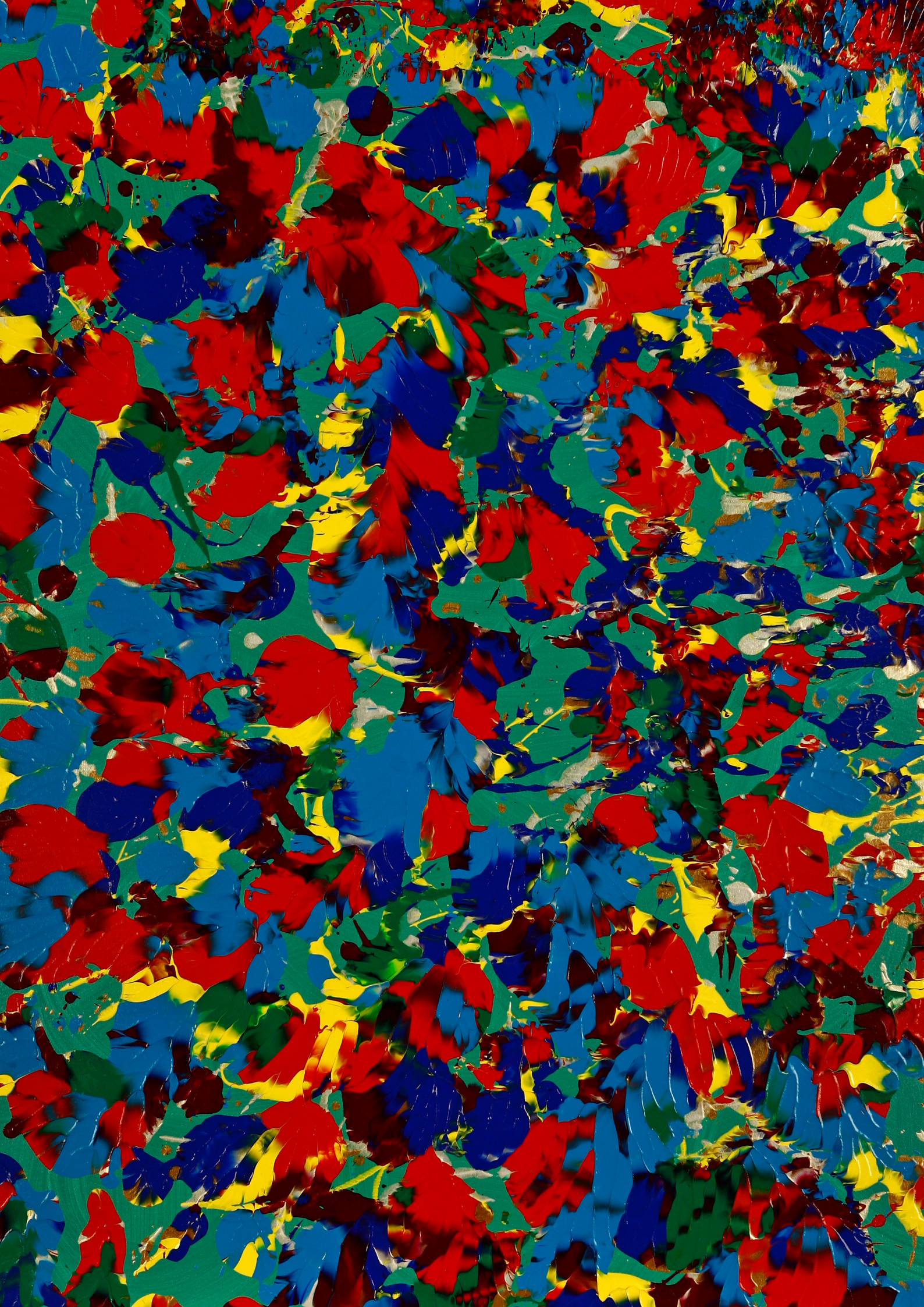
This was a time of true enlightenment for China, which saw the laying of technological and artistic foundations for almost all that was to follow. Science and engineering saw major achievements, with the invention of steel, paper, mechanical gears, the rotary fan, the mechanical trip hammer, seismometers, the blast furnace, the winnowing machine, armillary spheres, the concept of the water cycle in meteorology, the recognition of the cause of eclipses and thunder and much more. Many of these were first recognised by Wang Chong, who has a reasonable claim to being the world's first Renaissance man.

The overextension of the labor force during the Qin Dynasty would result in a popular uprising against the empire. In 206 BC, Liu Bang, a Qin official, led an army composed of peasants and some lower nobility to victory and established his own Dynasty in place, the Han. However, unlike the Qin, the Han would unify China and rule virtually uncontested for over four hundred years. It is during this time that much of what is now considered to be Chinese culture was first actualized. The bureaucracy started under the Qin was now firmly established. The vast lands of China were now under the firm grip of a central authority. Confucianism became the state ideology although the worship of Taoist deity remained widespread, both among the peasants and the aristocracy. Ancient histories and texts were analyzed and rewritten to be more objective while new legendary myths and cultural epics were transcribed.

The Han Dynasty, like the Zhou before it, is divided into two distinct periods, the Western Han (206 BC - 9 AD) and the Eastern Han (23-220 AD) with a brief interlude. Towards the end of the Western period, a series of weak emperors ruled the throne, controlled from behind the scenes by Wang Mang and Huo Guang, both relatives of empresses. They both exerted enormous influence over the government and when the last emperor suddenly passed away, Mang became ruling advisor, seizing this opportunity to declare his own Dynasty, the Xin, or 'New'. However, another popular uprising began joined by the members of the Liu clan, the family that ruled the Han Dynasty, the Xin came to a quick end and the Eastern Han was established in its place with its capital at Loyang (Chang'an, the capital of the Western Han, was completely destroyed).

However, even as Chinese influence spread across Southeastern Asia into new lands, the Eastern Han Dynasty was unable to recreate the glories of the Western Period. In fact, this period can be characterized by a bitter power struggle amongst a group of five consortial clans. These families sought to control the young, weak emperors with their court influence. Yet, as the emperors became distrustful of the rising power of the clans, they relied upon their eunuchs to defend them, often eliminating entire families at a time. During the Western Han, the Emperor was viewed as the center of the universe. However, this philosophy slowly disintegrated under the weak, vulnerable rulers of the Eastern Han, leading many scholars and officials to abandon the court. Eventually, the power of the Han would completely erode, ending with its dissolution and the beginning of the period known as the 'Three Kingdoms'.







TERRACOTTA

### **Han Dynasty Terracotta**

The fashion for terracotta grave goods, also known as mingqi, was undoubtedly stimulated by the example of the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty whose terracotta army is now legendary. Terracotta replicas of attendants, entertainers and domesticated animals, which replaced their sentient counterparts sacrificed in earlier dynasties, were among the items interred to ensure the material comfort of the deceased in the afterlife. This practice continued to flourish until the fall of the Tang dynasty in the early tenth century, after which it became more common to burn the items intended to accompany the deceased.





The smile that graces the face of this wonderful musician is typical of the happy entertainers from the Sichuan Province. Dressed in a long robe and a short cap, he kneels with his hands lightly placed around the instrument. The artist captured the intimacy, vibrancy, and intensity of an actual man. Locked in this bit of clay, a smile, a laugh, and a will to entertain are still apparent to a modern audience centuries after its creation.

*Han Figure - PH.0309*

Origin: China  
Circa: 100 BC to 100 AD

*£18,000.00*



*Set of Eleven Western Han Attendants - NP.006*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD

Dimensions: 17.5" (44.5cm) high x 4" (10.2cm) wide

£165,000.00



This apparently austere attendant stands in a typical pose of deference with hands tucked into the sleeves of a long, flowing robe with a lapel pulled across from the left and fastened on the right. Poking out at the collar is a roll of fabric of the warm undergarments, decorated in red against the lighter hue of the outer robe. The facial features, and particularly the eyes and lips, are executed with great delicacy, the hair is pulled back from the face and worn long at the back. The most impressive feature in an otherwise very sombre figurine is the widely flaring skirt, narrowing and becoming rather tight, then suddenly cascading outwards, a distinctive characteristic of early Han figural art. Of all the many styles of 'ming qi' known from the Han dynasty period, terracotta models of court attendants such as this are renowned as being of particularly high artistic quality. Such figurines clearly demonstrate a good number of the classic attributes of the Han style such as simplicity and a great sense of symmetry in forms.

*Western Han period terracotta figurine of a court attendant - RL.0948*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 9 BC

£18,000.00





The impact of the horse on the history of China cannot be underestimated. In fact, the ancient unification and expansion of the Chinese Empire was due in large part to this majestic creature. Their rapid mobility enabled quick correspondence between far away provinces, allowing the establishment of a centralized power. Likewise, the military role of horses aided in the conquest and submission of distant lands. The influence of the horse on the history and culture of China can be viewed, in part, through the artistic legacy of this great civilization. Believed to be relatives of mythological dragons, a theory reflecting their sacred status, horses were glorified and revered in sculpture, painting, and literature. During the unification of China under the Han Dynasty, bands of mounted nomadic warriors from the north threatened the country. In order to thwart their attacks, the Chinese imported stronger, faster steeds from Central Asia (as opposed to the native Mongol ponies) eventually leading to the creation of the Silk Road. In ancient China, owning a horse required wealth and status. They became signs of one's social standing. Equestrian activities such as polo further encouraged the indulgence of the wealthy few who owned horses. This terracotta sculpture of a horse captures the bold lines and strong muscularity of the horse. During the Han Dynasty, the horse was rendered in miniature sculptural form specifically in order to be interred with the dead. It was believed that the sculpted version could assume the powers of its living counterpart in the afterlife and assist the deceased in the dangerous journey to the next world. This custom catered to the needs of a particular belief system regarding life after death and the spiritual world. Not only is this sculpture an ancient answer to an eternal question that continues to plague us even today, but valso a stunning work of art of tremendous historical and cultural significance.

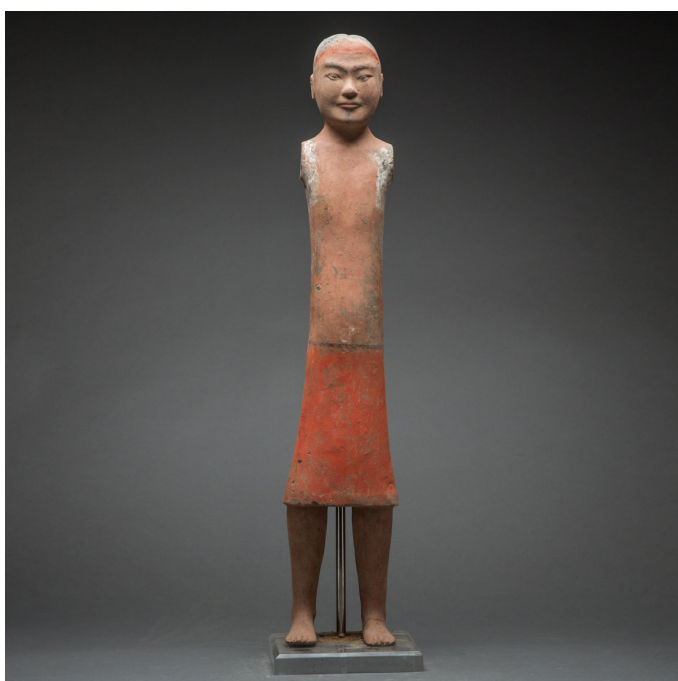
*Han Painted Terracotta Horse - CK.0307*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 11.6" (29.5cm) high x 15" (38.1cm) wide

£9,000.00



Figurines such as these, half-naked, represented a new form for the period and only a small proportion of Han human figures. Nudity was associated in China with uncivilised peoples, hence very seldom seen in orthodox, official artefacts. Indeed these figurines were not intended to be seen thus. Originally after being modelled and sculpted they were fired, painted and finally dressed. The textiles and wooden arms added to the figures decayed after being buried for centuries in the tombs of the Han noblemen. An amazing discovery of 600 figures accompanied by 4000 artefacts, was made in the tomb of the Emperor Liu Qi (r.156-141 BC) in Xianyang, Shaanxi. These figures were intended to continue providing the Emperor with the same services as those he enjoyed in his lifetime.

Such figures and models and other miniature or non-functional objects are collectively known as 'mingqi' (spirit articles) and have been traditionally interpreted as substitutes for the animals and human victims sacrificed during the funeral, as well as surrogates for objects of value placed in the tomb. Yet recent archaeological evidence have highlighted that these objects might have instead constituted an integral part of the strategy to recreate the earthly dwelling of the deceased. The replication of the living world and its constituents within the tomb might have been induced by various ideological factors, including a new religious trend emphasising the separation of the dead from the living and other material manifestations of different philosophical ideas, but also possibly by the effort to reproduce a self-sustaining version of the world, a fictive and efficacious comprehensive replica, made up of both real sacrificed humans and animals (the 'presented') and elements such as the terracotta army (the 're-presented').

In ancient China, burials constituted the preferred platform for social aggrandizement and strongly signified the power and status of their builders and occupants; soldiers, concubines or animals, or precious articles in the tomb constituted a symbol of power and reflected the wealth of its occupant. By the Qin period and throughout the Han period, the ability to have them reproduced – hence possessing the aesthetics, cognitive, technological and economic resources to reproduce the world- became a more efficient way of asserting power and status.

References: Yang Shaoneng ed. *The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology*, 1999, and Kesner, L. *Real and Substitute in the Early Chinese Mortuary Context, Mysteries of Ancient China*, 1996. As a principal burial component reserved for the members of the ruling class, such models have been found around the Han capital of Xi'an, in Shaanxi province: see the archaeological reports published in Kaogu 1984.10: 887-94, and Kaogu yu Wenwu 1990.4: 45, 53.

*Set of Painted Pottery Stick Soldiers - LA.530*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 24 AD

Dimensions: 12" (30.5cm) high

£7,500.00 (each)







This sculpture reveals Han artistry at its finest, combining realism, such as the careful delineation of the fingers, with an attractive simplicity and abstraction. It is exceptionally rare and intriguing. The lid is the shoulders and head of a man. The figure wears a close-fitting hat with an inverted 't' shape wedge affixed to the back. The hair and the small triangular beard are roughly incised in the surface of the wet clay. The ears, nose and bulging eyes were added in relief. The figure's arms are evident on the lower half of the container, also moulded in relief. His clasped hands hold a rectangular object. It is impossible to identify this with certainty, though it is probably some kind of ritual or votive object. Han pottery figurines are often depicted using the tools of their trade, such as chefs with a chopping board and knife or musicians with their instruments. Beneath the arms a second set of folds appear which may represent some kind of drapery. Despite minor restoration to the body of the vessel, the piece is in excellent condition and deserves to be the centrepiece of an ambitious collection of early Chinese pottery.

*Han Glazed Anthropomorphic Container - TF038*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 17.25" (43.8cm) high x 7.25" (18.4cm) wide

£14,000.00



Dressed in a long robe and a short cap, this wonderful flute player kneels with his hands lightly placed around the instrument. The artist, perhaps because he was portraying someone it was not appropriate to idealize or deify, captured the intimacy, vibrancy, and intensity of an actual man. Locked in this bit of clay, a smile, a laugh, and a will to entertain are still apparent to a modern audience centuries after its creation.

*Han Dynasty Painted Pottery 'Sichuan' Flute Player - DL.1007*

Origin: China

Circa: 202 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 22.44" (57.0cm) high x 10.63" (27.0cm) wide

£40,000.00



This wonderful dancer wears an elaborate robe and a fantastic headdress featuring three flowers. The elegant posture of her legs, placed either side of a stool or pot, reflects the movement and action of the dance. A reflection of the wealth and sophistication of ancient China, this sculpture intrigues us with its vast historical and cultural insights. Furthermore, this work is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious belief of the Han. The eternal warmth and joy embodied by this ancient dancer brings a smile to our own faces.

*Han Dynasty Painted Pottery 'Sichuan' Lady Dancer - DL1004*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 28.3" (71.9cm) high x 13.78" (35.0cm) wide

£48,000.00



The woman holds a mirror in her left hand, whilst her right hand rests upon her knee. She is seated on the ground with her legs tucked beneath her. Her hair has been arranged in an elaborate coiffure and is further adorned with three large medallions or stylized flowers. The artist captured the intimacy, vibrancy, and intensity of an actual woman.

*Han Dynasty Painted Pottery 'Sichuan' Lady Holding a Mirror - DL1006*

Origin: China

Circa: 202 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 23.62" (60.0cm) high x 12.2" (31.0cm) wide

£55,000.00



Dressed in a long robe and a short cap, this wonderful musician kneels with his hands lightly placed around the instrument. The artist, perhaps because he was portraying someone it was not appropriate to idealize or deify, captured the intimacy, vibrancy, and intensity of an actual man.

*Han Dynasty Painted Pottery 'Sichuan' Seated Musician - DL.1005*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 23.23" (59.0cm) high x 11.42" (29.0cm) wide

£50,000.00





This fabulous pair of pottery seated horses retain much of their original polychromy. The harnesses are carefully outlined in black and orange hues against their white bodies. The saddles are boldly depicted, but the most charming detail is the elaborate purple scrollwork that ripples over the figurines. The mouths of these magnificent creatures are slightly ajar and it is clear from their finery that they represent the prized possessions of a member of the elite of Han society.

Valued for their speed, strength and beauty, horses were one of the most admired animals in China. The horse has enabled man to swiftly transport massive armies into distant and neighboring territories in order to secure vast wealth and land. According to Chinese tradition, there existed a horse so powerful and beautiful that it was believed to be bequeathed from heaven. In early China, owning a horse required wealth and status, eventually becoming a sign of one's social standing. Equestrian activities only encouraged the indulgence of the wealthy few who owned horses. Naturally in Chinese art, the horse became a favorite subject of artists who tried to create visual representations of the animal that captured both its vitality and presence. During the Han Dynasty, the horse was rendered in miniature sculptural form to be interred with the dead. It was believed that the animal could assume its earthly powers and assist the deceased in the dangerous journey to the other world. This custom answered to the needs of a particular belief system regarding life after death and the spiritual world.

*A Pair of Han Dynasty White Painted Pottery Seated Horses - DL.2081*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 9.94" (25.2cm) high x 13" (33.0cm) wide

£60,000.00







This powerfully modeled torso of a horse is painted with a full harness in red and white pigment. The saddle is outlined in blue paint and decorated with red circular designs. Staring eyes, bared teeth and flared nostrils, the horse's expression is full of ferocity. With its ears pulled back, ridge of the nose sharply angled, and chest thrusting forward, we can imagine this horse magnificently galloping into battle, determined as is his rider, to triumph and conquer.

The legendary 'heavenly horses' of the West intrigued the Han emperor who set out on a mission to obtain these gallant horses that, according to legend, sweat blood. The horse became a symbol of military prowess, strength, and vitality. It was at the foundation upon which rests the army. Along the roads to the imperial tombs of the Han dynasty, recreations of horse in ceramic were placed to fortify the entrance as were recreations of chariots, riders and thousands of foot soldiers. This thirst for immortality is what brought about this elaborate burial custom for it was believed that the deceased needed to be protected in their journey to paradise

*Han Polychrome Torso of a Horse - H.501*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 13.5" (34.3cm) high

*£30,000.00*



The great influence of the horse throughout the history of China cannot be underestimated. In fact, the ancient expansion of the Chinese Empire was due in large part to the horse. The rapid mobility of horse allowed for quick communication between far away provinces. Likewise, the military role of horses aided in the conquest and submission of distant lands. The importance of the horse in the history and culture of China can be viewed, in part, through the artistic legacy of this great civilization. In sculpture, painting, and literature, horses were glorified and revered. Horses were believed to be relatives of mythological dragons, reflecting their sacred status within society. During the unification of China under the Han Dynasty, bands of mounted nomadic warriors from the north threatened the country. In order to thwart their attacks, the Chinese sought to import stronger, faster steeds from Central Asia (as opposed to the Mongol ponies used by the invaders), eventually leading to the creation of the Silk Road.

This set of eight sculptures of mounted soldier reveals the crucial military role the horse played in Ancient Chinese society. When compared to the stature of the rider, the importance of the horse becomes readily apparent. This creature provided security and strength, allowing the empire to secure its borders and expand its influences across Central Asia. One of the horse and rider sculptures is significantly larger than the other seven figures, suggesting that this rider is the leader of the force. The horses are white and grey, with saddles highlighted by orange and green painted. The riders wear orange tunics, a few have gray chest armor. They would have originally held a wooden bows or spears in their hands that likely rotted away over the centuries. This remarkable set of sculptures is a creation of immense cultural and historical significance that attests to the critical role of the horse in ancient Chinese civilization.

*Painted Terracotta Han Horse and Rider Sculptures - H.1095*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

£144,000.00 (set)

£ 12,000.00 (each)







Originally part of a set, this individual figurine represents an infantryman in a charged position with both hands clasped as if to hold a weapon. The right hand is lifted to carry a spear that is no longer there while the left arm is clenched firmly along his side. The soldier wears a long tunic. On his upper torso he wears a short apron with an armored vest and a white v- shaped collar. Angular faces with individual traits are briefly drawn.

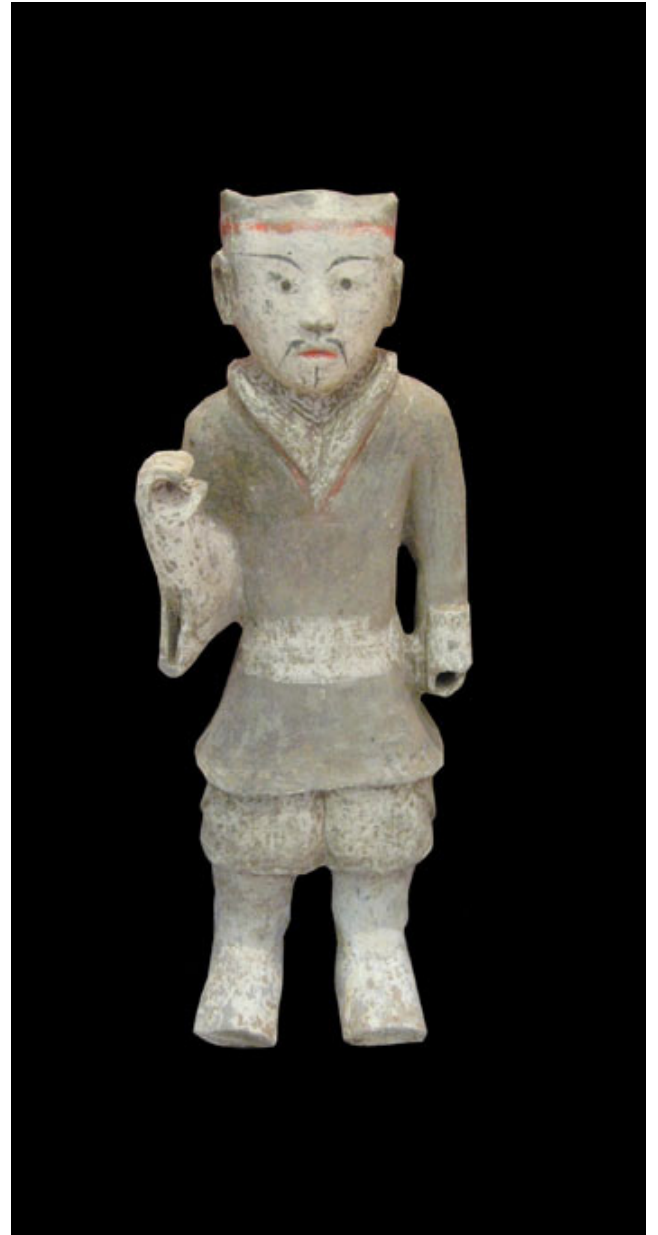
Such figures and models and other miniature or non-functional objects are collectively known as mingqi and have been traditionally interpreted as substitutes for the animal and human victims sacrificed during a funeral, as well as surrogates for objects of value placed in the tomb. Chinese tombs and burials signified the power and status of their builders and occupants. Placing a soldier such as this in a tomb would be considered a way to assert one's political status.



*Han Painted Pottery Soldier - H.1029*

Origin: China  
 Circa: 220 BC to 206 AD  
 Dimensions: 19.75" (50.2cm) high

£16,000.00



*Han Painted Pottery Soldier - RP001*

Origin: China  
 Circa: 220 BC to 206 BC  
 Dimensions: 19.5" (49.5cm) high x 7" (17.8cm) wide

£12,000.00

Originally part of a set, this individual figurine represents an infantryman in a charged position with both hands clasped as if to hold a weapon. The right hand is lifted to carry a spear that is no longer there while the left arm is clenched firmly along his side. The soldier wears a long tunic. On his upper torso he wears a short apron with an armored vest and a white v- shaped collar. Angular faces with individual traits are briefly drawn.

Such figures and models and other miniature or non-functional objects are collectively known as *mingqi* and have been traditionally interpreted as substitutes for the animal and human victims sacrificed during a funeral, as well as surrogates for objects of value placed in the tomb. Chinese tombs and burials signified the power and status of their builders and occupants. The gently undulating posture raises the possibility that the standing figure represents a court dancer. It is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious beliefs of the Han, symbolizing their fundamental beliefs in the beauty of this life and the next.





*Western Han Painted Terracotta Sculpture of a Dancer  
RP162*

Origin: China  
 Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD  
 Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high x 5.5" (14.0cm) wide

£18,000.00



*Western Han Painted Terracotta Sculpture of a Dancer  
RP160*

Origin: China  
 Circa: 206 AD to 9 AD  
 Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high x 5.25" (13.3cm) wide

£18,000.00



This superbly crafted ducks were probably included among the grave goods as a source of food. Geometric motifs are painted directly onto the wings consisting in bands that highlight the ducks' forms. The wildfowl's anatomical features are accentuated by the use of contrasting dark and light colours, in addition to some further incised decoration around the area of the head. The modeling is extremely naturalistic and reflects the religious beliefs held during the Han era. The more realistic the grave goods, the more likely they would perform their functions effectively in the afterlife. The artist may well have worked from a real-life model.

*Pair of Han Dynasty Terracotta Ducks - NP014*

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 7.5" (19.1cm) high x 5.5" (14.0cm) wide

£18,000.00 (pair)

£9,000.00 (each)







This exceptionally rare green-glazed money tree stand was excavated in the Henan Province. It is very unusual to find representations of a chimera and small figures on such pieces. According to Chinese tradition, the chimera was associated with peace and prosperity and is often found in tombs as a means to glorify the deceased and guard against evil spirits. This mythical creature is depicted with horns, the head of a dragon, the body of a lion and the wings of a bird. The face has been expertly modelled, with its tongue visible in its wide open mouth. Despite this, there is nothing sinister about this legendary creature; its expression is friendly and endearing. Recent studies suggest that sources for the chimera can be found in Mesopotamian art. The image first appears in China on bronze vessels from the 5th and 6th centuries BC. By the Han period it was represented in a whole variety of media, including gold, silver, stone and jade.

The charm of this terracotta sculpture is increased by the four small figures seated on the chimera's back and on a ledge which runs around the stand. It is possible to identify at least two musicians amongst them, including a kneeling flute player on the far left. No area of this impressive work has been left unadorned; the stand itself is embellished with stylised leaves and flowers. The surface of the clay is enhanced by a gorgeous green glaze, a hallmark of pottery sculptures produced during the Han Dynasty. Over time this glaze has acquired a beautiful, soft iridescent patina. Commonly referred to as 'silver frost', this iridescence is the result of wet and dry periods in a tomb whereby the clay dissolves the lead glaze and redeposits it on the surface, where it hardens. A testament of age, this patina is also admired by collectors for its charming aesthetic qualities, similar in effect to mother of pearl. This imaginative piece allows us to enter the world of fantasy and provides a unique window into the artistic culture of the Han period.

*Han Dynasty Green-Glazed Pottery Chimera Money Tree Stand - DL.997*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high x 14.5" (36.8cm) wide

£55,000.00



*Pair of Han Painted Terracotta Chimeras - CK.0303*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 10.3" (26.2cm) high x 5.5" (14.0cm) wide x 12.75" (32.4cm) depth

£40,000.00



This animated ceramic dog is a classic example of the Han sculptural tradition. Standing four-square on slim legs, its body is in fact carefully sculpted with details of the muscles, tail, paws and even claws. However, the head and face particularly stand out. The proportions are deliberately exaggerated, with a thick neck giving way to a deceptively graceful profile to the lower jaw and top of the head. The open mouth has sharp teeth, the head tilted back and the ears pricked up. Its alert stance suggests that it is in a position of defence, perhaps guarding someone/something from threats. The piece is covered with a creamy-ivory coloured glaze, applied over a light fineware body.

*Han Dynasty Green Glazed Pottery Dog - DK.161 (LSO)*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

£65,000.00





This green-glazed terracotta dog stands on guard with his head raised and mouth open. Terracotta grave goods, known as ‘mingqi’, were extremely popular among the social elite during the Han Dynasty. The nobility were buried with splendidly modeled replicas of all the people, animals and possessions they would require in the afterlife. These might range from wine vessels to miniature farms or elegant courtiers and musicians, intended to entertain their masters for eternity. Sculpted warriors or tomb guardians were also popular and the stance of this dog, suggests that its function was partly to guard the soul of its master. The collar and harness indicate that it was a domesticated animal, perhaps a beloved pet. The modeling is extremely naturalistic and reflects the religious beliefs held during the Han era. The more realistic the grave goods, the more likely they would perform their functions effectively in the afterlife. The artist may well have worked from a real-life model; the face, in particular, is incredibly expressive with its alert eyes and raised ears. The tail, which forms a coil along the dog’s back, is also indicative of the animal’s readiness to defend its owner against any potential threat. The pale green glaze is a distinctive feature of Han era pottery which does not appear in later ages. Over time the surface has acquired a beautiful, soft iridescent patina. Commonly referred to as “silver frost,” this iridescence is the result of wet and dry periods in a tomb whereby the clay dissolves the lead glaze and redeposits it on the surface, where it hardens. A testament of age, this patina is also admired by collectors for its charming aesthetic qualities, similar in effect to mother of pearl. Historically the Han Dynasty was one of the most illustrious in China’s past. It was divided into two distinct periods, the Western Han (c. 206 BC-9 AD) and the Eastern Han (23-220 AD). Trade flourished and the wealth and ideas that accompanied the opening of new trade routes led to the flourishing of the arts. Many written works – especially poetry and plays – date to this period, as well as paintings and cast bronze or ceramic sculptures. This piece is a wonderful example of the skill and creativity of Han artists and would make a charming addition to any serious collection of ancient art.

*Han Dynasty Green Glazed Standing Dog - SK.048*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

£40,000.00



Although it is possible that this splendid terracotta dog was intended to represent a source of food for the deceased, it is more likely that it was a domesticated animal. His ears stand upwards, as if attentively guarding his master throughout eternity. The heavy folds of skin around the eyes and the curly tail, as well as the general size and stature, suggest that this dog may be an ancestor of the modern Chinese Shar Pei breed.

*Han Dynasty Painted Pottery Walking 'Sichuan' Dog - DL.2091*

Origin: Sichuan Province

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 24.6" (62.5cm) high x 22" (55.9cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

£36,000.00



*Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Dog - RP.149*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

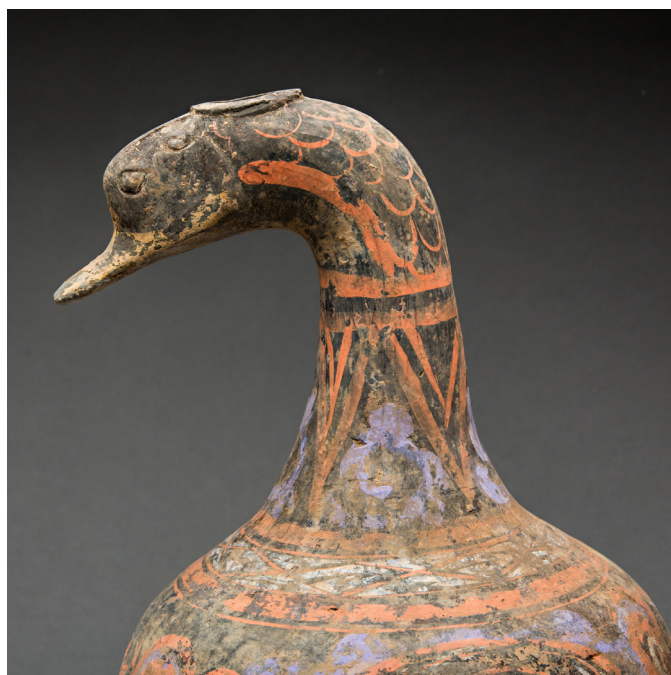
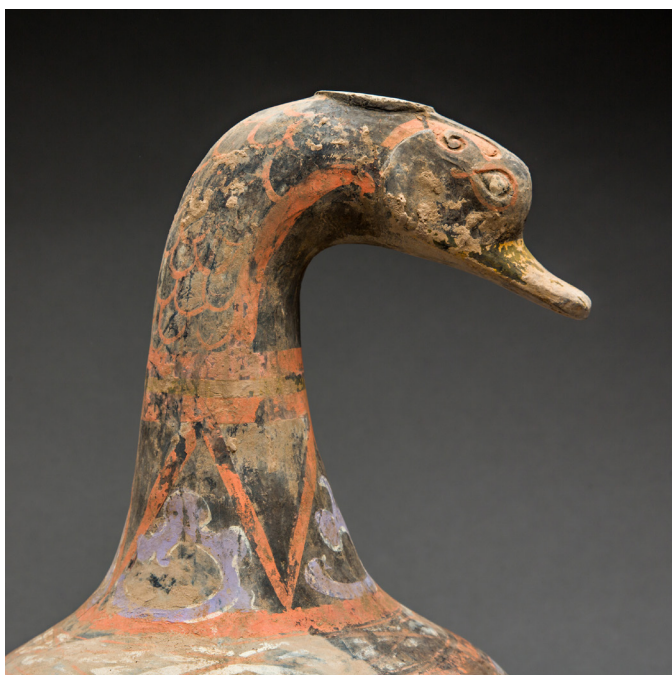
Dimensions: 24" (61.0cm) high x 21.5" (54.6cm) wide

*£48,000.00*









These highly unusual vessels were funerary containers and were interred with a deceased person of considerable social standing in order to aid their passage into the hereafter. The vessels are sinuously and elegantly designed, incorporating the neck and head of ducks into the spouts of the vessels. While their function is equivocal, their form suggests that they might have been used as serving vessels for liquids, although it is more probable that they were made specifically for burial with the deceased. This would also explain their extremely good colour preservation. Floral and geometric motifs are painted directly onto the wings consisting in bands that highlight the vessel's shape. The wildfowl's anatomical features are accentuated by the use of contrasting dark and light colours, in addition to some further incised decoration around the area of the head.

*Pair of Han period terracotta vessels, in the form of a duck - LSO.51*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 13" (33.0cm) high x 9" (22.9cm) wide

£72,000.00 (pair)

£36,000.00 (each)





*Pair of Han Terracotta Goat Sculptures - X.0413*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 11.75" (29.8cm) high x 15.375" (39.1cm) wide

£42,000.00





The large dog stands four-square, ears pricked up, head raised as if looking up to its master, barking. This figure was made from a two part mould and hand finished, with particular attention paid to rendering the eyes, ears and mouth. It has a wonderful abstract quality, much typical of Han period art in reducing figures to their mere essence. Chinese believed that the afterlife was very similar and a continuation of this world. Therefore, they wanted to be accompanied even in the underworld by objects that would maintain their social status and the life-style to which they were accustomed. Animals were extremely popular and such figurines show the importance of raising and keeping pets in ancient China.

*Han period glazed terracotta figure of a dog - TF028*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 11" (27.9cm) high x 10" (25.4cm) wide

*£24,000.00*



This magnificent terracotta dog dates to the Han era, the golden age of ceramic funerary sculpture.

The large dog stands steadfast: legs four- square, hind legs slightly extended as though ready to pounce, ears pricked up, brow furrowed, and tail curled upwards. Furthermore, it appears muscular, jawline defined, torso robust. The dog's demeanor demonstrates its function of attentively guarding his master throughout eternity, as it would have in the past life. The striking red collar, which appears to be more of a harness continuing further down the body, further attests to the dog's domestication. In all, the figure has a wonderful realistic quality that breaks away from the Han style of reducing figures to their mere essence. We get to truly visualize the essence of the dog, as well as dwell on its inner spirit.

*Han Large Terracotta Sculpture of a Seated Dog - RP062*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 32.25" (81.9cm) high x 21" (53.3cm) wide

£150,000.00



This example is full of character; the boar stands with his head lowered and his front legs slightly apart. The body is compact and the stance is defensive, as if anticipating an imminent attack. Incised lines indicate the joints and the thick bristles on the animal's back. The facial details are particularly impressive, especially the short protruding ears and the wide upturned snout. In many ancient cultures the boar was associated with strength, courage and fearless aggression. In China it also represented wealth and good fortune. Clearly well-nourished, this magnificent beast reflects the high status of its original owner. The impressive naturalism, especially in the depiction of animals, reflects Chinese religious beliefs. The more life-like the sculpture, the more likely it would perform its correct function in the afterworld. Our knowledge of the social and religious lives of Han has been vastly enriched by such finds which continue to impress us today

*Han Terracotta Boar - TF026*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 10.50" (26.7cm) high x 18" (45.7cm) wide

£36,000.00





This bull, pulling a cart behind him, clearly functioned as a beast of burden that was to perform onerous chores throughout eternity. Besides its function, this sculpture is also remarkable for its exquisite state of preservation. Remnants of the original paint that once decorated the work are visible on the sides of the cart and the animal's face. Such delicate pigments rarely survive the ravages of time and the stresses of excavation. The cart is a masterpiece unto itself, composed of three separate pieces: the cart structure and two wheels with spokes. During the Han Dynasty, the Chinese believed that the afterlife was a continuation of our earthly existence. Thus, this bull and cart was entombed in place of the real thing in order to provide for the transport needs of the deceased as he journeys through the afterlife. This work is more than a mere sculpture; it is a gorgeous memorial to the religious and philosophical beliefs of the Han Dynasty.

*Han Dynasty Painted Pottery Bull Cart - DL.2064*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 9" (22.9cm) high x 17" (43.2cm) wide

*£48,000.00*



Sculptures of pigs are frequently buried alongside noble members of society during the Han Dynasty. Sculpted in all media, the pig was a symbol of wealth as well as a staple of the menu for the afterlife. As was the custom, sculpted effigies of animals were interred as food sources in the next world. While some animals were meant to labor in the next world, others, such as this boar, were clearly meant for consumption. The Han viewed the afterlife as an extension of our earthly lives. Thus, the things that we enjoyed in this world were continual enjoyed in the next.

This standing pig appears to comprehend his role in the afterlife. His snarling mouth with subtle fangs reveals his hesitance to be anybody's meal. In fact, the facial structure of this hog is quite reminiscent of snarling terracotta dog sculptures that served the same function. The defined musculature of the beast further emphasizes his power. However, it is this power that will be transferred to the deceased through the symbolic consumption of his "meat." Originally, this pig was created to provide sustenance in the next world. However, today, it nourishes our eyes with its tremendous beauty and fills our minds with its tremendous cultural and historical value.

*Eastern Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Pig - H.640*

Origin: China

Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD

Dimensions: 7.5" (19.1cm) high

*£24,000.00*





This magnificent terracotta dog dates to the Han era, the golden age of ceramic funerary sculpture.

The large dog stands steadfast: legs four-square, hind legs slightly extended as though ready to pounce, ears pricked up, brow furrowed, and tail curled upwards. Furthermore, it appears muscular, jawline defined, torso robust. The dog's demeanor demonstrates its function of attentively guarding his master throughout eternity, as it would have in the past life. The striking red collar, which appears to be more of a harness continuing further down the body, further attests to the dog's domestication. In all, the figure has a wonderful realistic quality that breaks away from the Han style of reducing figures to their mere essence. We get to truly visualize the essence of the dog, as well as dwell on its inner spirit.

*Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Dog - TF022*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 AD to 220 AD

Dimensions: 16" (40.6cm) high x 18" (45.7cm) wide

£48,000.00



This sturdy composite horse-like figure has three spikes and the tail curved upwards to form a loop. The head slightly bent downwards, his equine traits carefully incised and partly in relief. The menacing expression was in theory meant to serve an apotropaic purpose, perhaps reflecting the northerners' greater awareness of the dark world of spirits. Yet in this small figurine the fearful expression is absent, instead reflecting perhaps the craftsman's indulgence in a little creative liberty.

Clearly, this is a mythological beast. With its head lowered, he appears to charge forward like a bull, thrusting his horns forward into whatever obstacle might block his path. Remnants of the original polychrome pigment are visible throughout the work, including the white slip that once covered the majority of the beast's body. Rarely do such delicate details survive the ravages of time and the stresses of excavation. A similar example, though lacking the paint details, was unearthed in Yanshi, Henan province in a tomb dated to the western Jin period.

This magnificent sculpture is an insightful glimpse into the fantastic mythology of ancient China. For an in-depth description of horned tomb guardians see: Fong Mary H., "Tomb Guardians Figurines: Their Evolution and Iconography" in Kuwayama ed, *Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China: Papers on Chinese Ceramic Funerary Sculptures*, Los Angeles, 1991: 84-115.

*Han Terracotta Mythological Beast - TF015*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 AD to 220 AD

Dimensions: 10" (25.4cm) high x 16.2" (41.1cm) wide

£28,000.00







This magnificent sculpture is an insightful glimpse into the fantastic mythology of ancient China. The sturdy horse-like figure with three red-painted spikes and four flattened grey roundels alligned on the spinal cord, the tail curved upwards to form a loop attached on the back. The head slightly bent downwards, his equine traits carefully incised and partly in relief.

The sweetness of this animal might betray a southern origin, where tomb guardians dating to the Western Jin onward developed a much more human connotation, when compared with their northern prototypes.

Such a composite animal first emerged during the Western Jin period (265-316 AD) and later evolved in the phantasmagorical human-headed tomb guardians known as earth-spirits (*Chin: du sheng*), so popular during the Tang dynasty in northern and central China. Instead, in the south, tomb guardians quickly disappeared after the Eastern Jin period (317-420 AD) : an abrupt change of practice that probably reflected different cultural approaches. In fact, northern people-being more mindful of spirits and demons-were always more inclined to protect the dead from undesirable encounters and went into a lot of effort in creating wonderful sculptures of tomb guardians; southerners instead simply chose to continue to transmit the age-old practice of providing for the daily life of the deceased in the afterlife.

Clearly, this is a mythological beast. With its head lowered, he appears to charge forward like a bull, thrusting his horns forward into whatever obstacle might block his path. Remnants of the original polychrome pigment are visible throughout the work, including the white slip that covers the majority of the beast's body. Rarely do such delicate details survive the ravages of time and the stresses of excavation. A similar example, though lacking the paint details, was unearthed in Yanshi, Henan province in a tomb dated to the western Jin period.

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*Painted Terracotta Sculpture of a Mythological Beast - X.0351*

Origin: China

Circa: 265 AD to 316 AD

Dimensions: 8" (20.3cm) high x 10.50" (26.7cm) wide

£18,000.00



The extensive polychrome painting that decorates the body of this vessel, with swirling foliate and abstract motifs, is quite rare. Seldom do more than traces of pigments survive intact. Here, designs rendered in purple, orange, and green are easily discerned against the dull gray hue of the fired terracotta. Bands highlight the low neck, accentuating the join of the neck and body. This food storage container was found interred alongside a deceased nobility or elite member of the Han social hierarchy.

*Large Han Painted Terracotta Vessel - TE016*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 16" (40.6cm) high x 17" (43.2cm) wide

£65,000.00





The term 'Fang' is a prefix used to describe a squared-off or faceted variation of a normally rounded form, in this case the Hu wine storage vessel. The extensive polychrome painting that decorates the sides and the lid of this vessel, depicting scrolls and geometric motifs, is quite rare. Seldom do more than traces of pigments survive intact and in this example they retain much of their original brilliance. The patterns may have been inspired by contemporary embroidery and textile patterns, in tune with the fashion of the time. The beautiful Tao Tieh masks, depicting stylized dragons holding handles in their mouths, are noteworthy for their fine relief details and painted highlights. This wine vessel was found interred alongside an elite member of the Han social hierarchy. The wine once contained within this Fang Hu has vanished, perhaps consumed during the celestial feasts of the afterlife. While this vessel represents the sophisticated artistic and culinary traditions of the Han, it also symbolizes their religious and philosophical beliefs.

*A Han Dynasty Painted Pottery 'Fang-Hu' - DL.2082*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 16.7" (42.4cm) high x 7.4" (18.8cm) wide

£55,000.00



As the technology of ceramic production increased significantly with the development of kilns and low-temperature lead-glaze ware during the Han Dynasty, the nature of ceramic works became more geared toward practical uses and large scale production.

Covered with a fine mat impression, this vessel exemplifies the beauty of minimalist decoration common among practical forms of pottery. The shape of this particular vessel, found also among early glazed ware vessels of the Shang Dynasty, had been perfected by the peak of the Han Dynasty. Its symmetrical balance and fluid curvature attests to advanced techniques and better workmanship. A widened belly dramatizes its appearance as its short-rimmed neck adds to the exaggeration. Though made for practical purposes, it reflects the artistic standards of taste; its rose achieves a middle ground between utility and beauty. The ceramic artisan of the Han Dynasty is accredited for revolutionizing China's ceramic industry, paving the way for the development of fine porcelain in later days.

*Han Glazed Terracotta Vase - H.515*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 11.25" (28.6cm) high x 13.25" (33.7cm) wide

£15,000.00









Buff earthenware with moulded decoration and straw-coloured lead glaze.

Similar in shape to contemporary bronze Hu vases, lead glazed ceramic versions emerged in Shaanxi during the second century BCE, mostly to replace their metal prototype in tomb furnishings (*mingqi*). They were executed in diverse shapes, the most luxurious examples having moulded low-relief friezes.

The two animal masks with rings (*pushou xianhuan*) here serving as decorative handles, reflect the style of contemporary door-knockers.

The scene with various creatures could be interpreted as either a royal hunt or a depiction of the legendary Immortals land. In both cases a customary auspicious scene found on various media, from gilded *boshanlu* censers to lacquer and textiles.

Examples of this type of globular jar with flat bottom have been found in late Western Han tombs in Shaanxi and Henan, confirming the purpose of this type of ceramic ware.

Although a number of scholars have proposed that lead-flux glazes ultimately derived from the West, their emergence was probably encouraged by Chinese Daoist practice. In fact, Daoist alchemists in their search for immortality had since the Eastern Zhou period developed formulas involving the use of smelt lead which were believed to produce elixirs able to transform the body if swallowed.

The result of melting lead with sand and clay during the preparation of these immortality-granting potions were likely to have been noticed by the potters, who eventually adapted the process for glazing.

*Lead-Glazed Terracotta Jar - LO.617*

*Origin: China*

*Circa: 100 BC to 8 AD*

*£25,000.00*







Earthenware globular body with a plain band around the shoulder and green lead glaze throughout. Similar in shape to a bronze hu, these lead glazed ceramic versions emerged in Shaanxi during the second century BCE. They were executed in diverse shapes, the most luxurious examples having moulded low-relief friezes. The two animal masks with rings (*pushou xianhuan*) here serving as decorative handles, reflect the style of contemporary door-knockers.

Examples of this type of globular jar with flat bottom have been found in late Western Han tombs in Shaanxi and Henan. Although a number of scholars have proposed that lead-flux glazes ultimately could have derived from the West, their emergence was probably encouraged by Chinese Daoist practice. In fact, Daoist alchemists in their search for immortality had since the Eastern Zhou period developed formulas involving the use of smelted lead, which were believed to produce elixirs able to transform the body if swallowed. The result of melting lead with sand and clay during the preparation of these immortality-granting potions was likely to have been noticed by the potters, who eventually adapted the process for glazing.

*Lead-Glazed Jar with Dish-shaped Mouth - LA.523*

Origin: China

Circa: 100 BC to 8 AD

Dimensions: 13.25" (33.7cm) high

£8,000.00







BRONZE



This bronze fang hu is notable for its elegant simplicity. Such a vessel would have functioned as a ritual container for the storage and transportation of sumptuous wines. This refined fang hu is essentially unadorned, save for two decorative Tao Tieh mask handles that have been attached to the swelling body. These stylized animals represent a type of dragon found in Chinese mythology. Their abstracted representation demonstrates, as well as the incised patterns, the influence of previous styles such as the Zhou Dynasty. The lid is embellished with four abstract 'handles' that appear to be highly stylized birds. Over the ages, the bronze has acquired a fabulous patina of green hues, adding both delightful colors and pleasing textures to this otherwise sparsely adorned vessel. Such a work, forged from bronze, would have been the treasured possession of an elite member of the social hierarchy. Quite simply, only a court nobility of wealthy merchants could afford such a luxury. Although this vessel would have served as a wine container in life, it was found discovered buried in a tomb. A symbol for the bountiful pleasures of life, for drinking and feasting, this hu would have represented the joys to be experienced in the afterlife and the feasts and celebrations yet to come. Today, this vessel is not only a gorgeous work of art, treasured for its history and rarity; but also a stunning reminder of the richness and luxury of the Han Dynasty, both in this world and the next.

*Han Bronze Fang Hu - H.813*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 16.25" (41.3cm) high x 8.25" (21.0cm) depth

£24,000.00

This Hu has a pear shaped body which swells at the belly above a flared circular base and contracts at the neck. From the neck, the vessel flares out forming a wide mouth decorated on the side with a plain band. A second band divides the mouth and upper belly, and a third band appears accross the center of the belly below two taotie mask handles. During the Han Dynasty, the tradition of casting bronze vessels for use in ritual ceremonies continued. By this time, the shapes of vessels had become canonized and subject to many stylistic restrictions. However, technological advances had enabled foundries to increase production, making them more accessible to wealthy patrons. This Hu is classified as a wine holding vessel, serving an important role in the indulgent lifestyle of the wealthy and the rites and ritual of the Han.

*Han Bronze Hu - H.038*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 14.375" (36.5cm) high x 11" (27.9cm) wide

£60,000.00





This long-necked bronze hu is notable for its elegant simplicity. Such a vessel would have functioned as a container of sumptuous wines. This refined hu is essentially unadorned, save for a protruding ring along the neck of the vessel. However, this ring is more functional than decorative, serving as a grip to lift the vessel and pour out its precious contents. Most notable is the distinctive garlic-shaped mouth. Originally, a lid would have capped this hu; however, it has long since vanished. Over the ages, the bronze has acquired a fabulous patina of alternating green and burgundy hues, adding both delightful colors and pleasing textures to this otherwise sparsely adorned vessel. Such a work, forged from bronze, would have been the treasured possession of an elite member of the Han Dynasty social hierarchy. Quite simply, only a court nobility of wealthy merchants could afford such a luxury. Although this vessel would have functioned as a wine container in life, it was found discovered buried in a tomb. A symbol for the bountiful pleasures of life, for drinking and feasting, this hu would have represented the joys to be experienced in the afterlife and the feasts and celebrations yet to come.

*Han Long-Necked Bronze Hu - H.692*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 13.5" (34.3cm) high

£24,000.00



This diminutive bronze hu is notable for its elegant simplicity. It was used as a container for the storage and transport of sumptuous wines. A band in low relief decorates the surface between shoulders and neck. This band complements the lower half of the body that is raised slightly when compared to the neck and middle. Two decorative Tao Tieh mask handles can be found on the shoulder of the hu.

*Han Bronze Hu - H.814*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 7.5" (19.1cm) high

*£24,000.00*





During the Han Dynasty, the iconography of the decorations that adorn the back sides of mirrors was inextricably linked to their philosophical beliefs and perception of the universe. For instance, on this example, echoes of this symbolism are visible. The outer flat rim symbolizes the heavens while the four smaller bosses amongst the swimming fish represent the four cardinal directions and the quadrants of the universe. A hole has been drilled into the large central boss. A chord would have been wound through here to serve as a handle.

*Han Silver-Plated Bronze Mirror - H.847*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 4" (10.2cm) high

£4,800.00



This slender bronze hu would have once functioned as a container of sumptuous wines two thousand years ago. This refined hu is remarkable for the handle and lid that survive intact, attached to the body by chains. The chains, in turn, are connected to two small Tao Tieh mask handles.

The lid has also been adorned with a stylized floral motif rendered in low relief. These abstracted representations demonstrate the influence of previous styles, such as the Zhou Dynasty, on the art of the Han. A series of ringed handles also hang from the lower half of the body, just above the rim. However, these handles were likely purely decorative; although it is possible that a rope could have been wound between them to assist in the transportation of the precious wines contained within. Over the ages, the bronze has acquired a fabulous patina of alternating green and burgundy hues, adding both delightful colors and pleasing textures to the work. Forged from bronze, this hu would have been the treasured possession of an elite member of the Han Dynasty social hierarchy.

*Han Hu with Handle and Lid - H.861*

Origin: China

Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

Dimensions: 15" (38.1cm) high

*£48,000.00*





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